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Distribution of Ibogaine and Noribogaine in a Man Following a Poisoning Involving Root bark of the *Tabernanthe iboga* Shrub

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Abstract:

In the present paper, we report for the first time the tissue distribution of ibogaine and noribogaine, the main metabolite of ibogaine, in a 48-year-old Caucasian male, with a history of drug abuse, found dead at his home after a poisoning involving the ingestion of root bark from the shrub *Tabernanthe iboga*. Ibogaine and noribogaine were quantified in tissues and fluids using a fully validated liquid chromatography-electrospray mass spectrometry method. Apart from cardiac tissue, ibogaine and noribogaine were identified in all matrices investigated. The highest concentrations were found in spleen, liver, brain, and lung. The tissue/subclavian blood concentration ratios averaged 1.78, 3.75, 1.16, and 4.64 for ibogaine and 0.83, 2.43, 0.90, and 2.69 for noribogaine for spleen, liver, brain, and lung, respectively. Very low concentrations of the two drugs were found in the prostatic tissue. Both ibogaine and noribogaine are secreted in the bile and cross the blood-brain barrier. Four other compounds were detected in most of the studied matrices. One of them was identified as ibogamine. Unfortunately, we were not able to positively identify the other three compounds because of the unavailability of reference substances. Two of them could possibly be attributed to the following oxidation products: iboluteine and desmethoxyiboluteine. The third compound could be ibogaline.

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